



For Immediate Release
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John Carney Releases Plan to Provide Help and Support to Delawareans with Disabilities

Wilmington – Lt. Governor John Carney released his plan to provide help and support to Delawareans living with disabilities today. Carney talked about the challenges thousands of Delawareans face and the need for state government to work to address those challenges.

“A true measure of the commitment of government to the people it serves is how well it addresses the needs of those among us who are living with disabilities,” said Carney. **“The controversies that have dominated efforts to better serve this population must be replaced with better communication and the creation of positive, productive partnerships between the state, people living with disabilities, providers and the larger community in which we all live.**

“This will require leadership from a Governor who can make the changes we need – I will be that Governor,” added Carney.

Carney’s plan to support Delawareans with disabilities includes the following elements:

Focus on Community-Based Care

- Closely monitor and look to expand Delaware’s “Money Follows the Person” pilot program, which looks to incorporate the following:
 - Creating a central entity that increases access to services and provides information about Long Term Care.
 - Refining quality assurance efforts to get more accurate feedback on services, incidents, rewards and incentives for providers.

Address Providers

- Review the contract system that is the basis of the relationship between the non-profit agencies that are the backbone of our system of care for people with disabilities and the state. Carney will direct the secretaries of the Department of Health and Social Services and the Department of Services for Children Youth and Families to give consideration to:
 - Service contracts for more than one year. For instance, the State could sign 5-year leases with annual increments. Right now, the state goes through a lengthy bureaucratic process each year that is costly to both providers and the state. An

annual planned increase would help with continuity of care, planning, and would reduce our costs.

- In order to protect the client and assure quality care and positive outcomes, the continuation of the contract should be contingent upon performance measures.
- Tying incentives to performance measures.
- A rational, consistent way to measure both costs and service outcomes. Providers need to know they are getting reasonable reimbursement rates and the State needs to know it is getting quality service for its investment.

Improve Workforce Development for Disability Services

- Direct the Department of Labor to deliver a recruitment and retention plan for qualified, skilled workers to serve people with disabilities.
- Expand and create opportunities for student internships in disability services.

Create Employment Opportunities

- Direct the Department of Labor to analyze current employment of people with disabilities, develop a reasonable target to increase employment, and an approach to do so.
- Make the State a leader in hiring people with disabilities. The state can show leadership and “walk the talk” in this area. Right now, we have a Selective Placement Program that allows people with disabilities to be hired quickly into positions they are qualified for. Carney will make sure that hiring managers at all levels of state government are aware of this program and take advantage of it whenever possible.
- Reach out to the business community to create partnerships and identify opportunities.
- Use public service announcements and other outreach tools to address any bias that exists in the private sector. Employers need to know that statistics indicate that people living with disabilities miss work less than able-bodied people and changes that need to be made to the work environment are usually minimal.

Improve Key Services

- **Housing:** Adolescents, young adults and adults with disabilities often need some staff support in addition to low- or moderate-income housing. Private providers can be contracted to offer that support. Faith-based organizations also are active and willing to be more helpful in this area. Identifying appropriate housing is critical and must be a priority. That includes people with mental illness and substance abuse issues.
- **Transportation:** This is one of the most important issues for people with disabilities. We have made some progress in recent years, including passing legislation that requires call boxes at gas stations so people with disabilities don’t have to leave their car or go to New Jersey to fill up. We’ve also started a pilot for weekend bus service throughout the state that will help many people with disabilities get to their jobs on weekends.

As Governor, Carney will work to ensure that these programs are as effective as possible in meeting the needs of people with disabilities and that no one will be forced to turn

down a job because of a lack of transportation. One of his first steps will be to address Paratransit bus routes, which are critical for those who do not drive. Routes must go across county lines and be convenient for those who use them the most.

- **Transitioning from youth to adult services:** This is an area that needs to be addressed quickly. We do not do a good enough job serving young adults in all service areas. Nationally, there are movements to expand kids services to young adults in their early 20s when the brain is finished developing. It is a question of funding and of who will be responsible for that population. We need to look at this issue, identify the best answers to those questions and get it done.

Maximize Federal Funding

- Direct the Division of Medicaid and Medical Assistance (DMMA) review all the current Medicaid waivers so there is one document with a comprehensive analysis of what Delaware offers. This will allow us to look at how we can get and use federal funds more effectively.
- Continue to work to expand our SCHIP program to include the parents of the children who are covered and possibly raise the income limit for those eligible, and when revenues rebound, eliminate the monthly premium that we require enrollees to pay.

Physical Activity

- Through the Delaware Center for Health Promotion, which Carney started in partnership with the University of Delaware, has already started promoting physical activity programs for people with disabilities by updating the Lt. Governor's Challenge to give them more opportunities to participate.

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